DGRG Conference Programme – Overview Day 1

Time	In Person		Online
9:45 – 10:00	**Registration and coffee** Room: 152-153 Cayley		Online programme starts at 10:00 BST
10:00 – 10:20	**Welcome address** Room UG05		
10:20 – 11:30	**Parallel sessions A**		**Online Session A**
	A1: Room UG04 **Exploring the Potential of AI in Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Creative Business Students** *Natalia Berger and Joke Hermes* **Algorithms and an ethics of care** *Sophia Maalsen*	**A2: Room: 154** **Threat Modelling for Geo-spatial Data in the Humanitarian Context** *Brian K. Masinde, Michael Nagenborg, Caroline Gevaert, Fran Meissner, and Jaap Zevenbergen* **Crossing Boundaries: An Ethics of Mapping in the Humanitarian Use of AI** *Isaac Oluoch* **Algorithmic content curation on social media and human rights** *Dorina Gyetván*	**A web-based map as a digital representation of place and source of data in geographical research - the case study of the Google Maps** *Maciej Główczyński* **Epistemologies of Landscape in the Age of Deep Mediatization** *Maria Faust*
11:30 – 11:45	**Coffee break** Room: 152-153 Cayley		
11:45 – 13:00	**Data Ethics and Assessing Risk when Sharing Data: Workshop led by the Open Data Institute** Room 154		
13:00 – 14:00	**Lunch** Room: 152-153 Cayley		
14:00 – 14:50	**Keynote: Stephanie Hare** Room UG05		
14:50 – 16: 00	**Parallel sessions B**		**Online Session B**
	B1 Room 154 **The ethics of researching online safe spaces** *Anita Fuentes, Nerea Boneta-Sádaba, and Sergio Tomás-Forte* **Geospatial Ethical frameworks: A meta-analysis** *Doug Specht* **Fabrication as an ethical data practice?** *Natasha Whiteman*	**B2 Room UG04** **Contact-tracing and privacy: A digital literacy and information question. The Italian case** *Riccardo Nanni, Diletta Huyskes, and Maurizio Napolitano* **The ethics of suggestion in digital mental health technologies** *Jessy Williams* **Investigating ethical entanglements: a narrative and comparative examination of Covid-19 digital tracing applications in South Africa and Switzerland** *Jennifer Barella and Saskia Greyling*	**Challenges and opportunities of the representation using Artificial Intelligence tools to hire personnel. Approaches from a posthuman perspective.** *Julieta Madeleine García Zamora* **Digital Divide : Case Study of India** *Nivedita Singh*
16:00 – 17: 00	**Book Launch Panel: A Research Agenda for Digital Geographies** Room UG05		
17:00 – 17:15	**End of day 1 remarks** Room UG05		
17:15 -	**Wine reception** Room: 152-153 Cayley		End of online programme

DGRG Conference Programme – Overview Day 2

Time	In Person
9:30 – 10:00	**Welcome and breakfast** Room: 152-153 Cayley
10:00 – 10:10	**Welcome address** Room: 152-153 Cayley
10:10 – 11:15	**Parallel sessions C**
	C1 Room UG05 **Algeria's Challenge for Sovereign and Democratic Data** *Laeed Zaghlami* **(online)** **Climate Change and Disinformation, fake news and fake trends** *Paula Cordeiro* **(online)**
11:15 – 11:30	**Coffee break** Room: 152-153 Cayley
11:30 – 13:00	**Interactive workshop: Seeing London through the ethics of PokemonGo** (This activity will take place on and off of campus, so please dress appropriately for the weather) Room: 152-153 Cayley
13:00 – 13:15	**Conference close** Room UG05

Sessions in Detail: Day 1

KEYNOTE: Stephanie Hare

14:00-14:50 - Room UG05

About Stephanie Hare

Stephanie Hare is the author of *Technology Is Not Neutral: A Short Guide to Technology Ethics*. The volume addresses one of today's most pressing problems: how to create and use tools and technologies to maximize benefits and minimize harms? Drawing on the author's experience as a technologist, political risk analyst and historian, the book offers a practical and cross-disciplinary approach that will inspire anyone creating, investing in or regulating technology, and it will empower all readers to better hold technology to account.

Stephanie Hare is a researcher, broadcaster and author focused on technology, politics and history. Selected for the BBC Expert Women programme and the Foreign Policy Interrupted fellowship, she contributes frequently to radio and television and has published in the Financial Times, The Washington Post, the Guardian/Observer, the Harvard Business Review, and WIRED. Previously she worked at Accenture, Palantir, and Oxford Analytica and held the Alistair Horne Visiting Fellowship at St Antony's College, Oxford. She earned a PhD and MSc from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and a BA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, including a year at the Université de la Sorbonne (Paris IV).

Parallel Sessions A
10:25-11:30

A1: Room UG04

Exploring the Potential of AI in Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Creative Business Students
Natalia Berger and Joke Hermes

Recently, we conducted a series of 60 expert interviews on data literacy. They were asked how we could best teach critical data skills to students in creative business and journalism curricula. They emphasise the importance of critical thinking. Our location in a creative business school made us check how the critical thinking they advocate is addressed in CB curricula. It seems that in practice-oriented education, this is a neglected area. In this paper, we will show the potential of using ChatGPT and similar generative AI tools to develop critical thinking skills in students interested in careers in media, communication, music, tourism, and entertainment. We do so in close contact with educators in the Netherlands and Europe generally who, like us, are starting to incorporate AI-related knowledge and tools into their curricula to better prepare students. We use the concept of machine heuristics (Sundar & Kim, 2019) and the evaluation of the chatbot's performance and its results' credibility. As existing academic literature heavily focuses on STEM fields and student support services (Hudson et al., 2022), we feel it is high time to address AI-assisted education for disciplines such as Creative Business.

Algorithms and an ethics of care
Sophia Maalsen

Geographers have produced powerful critiques of the harmful and discriminatory effects of algorithms. However, less attention has been paid to potential benefits of algorithms. While not dismissing critiques, this paper draws upon a feminist ethics of care to reframe our relationship with algorithms using examples across the urban and home. Care is characterised by entanglements of humans and nonhumans – we care for and with other things, and it is this from this position that I situate care as a practice, politics and ethics that is bound up in our encounters with algorithmic technologies and which have implications beyond ourselves. This is central to thinking about redressing some of the biases and harm that algorithms have been shown to enable because "politics of caring have been at the heart of concerns with exclusions and critiques of power dynamics" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2011: 86). Care does not mean the absence of critique but thinking with care about our algorithmic encounters allows us to think about how we can care for algorithms and algorithms can care for us in ways which can be politicised. References: Puig de la Bellacasa M

(2011) Matters of care in technoscience: Assembling neglected things. Social Studies of Science 41(1): 85-106. DOI: 10.1177/0306312710380301

Threat Modelling for Geo-spatial Data in the Humanitarian Context
Brian K. Masinde, Michael Nagenborg, Caroline Gevaert, Fran Meissner, and Jaap Zevenbergen

Geospatial data play a central role in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). In that context it is used to decide where, when and who should be given aid. Like in other domains, the datafication and digitalization of humanitarian aid raises privacy issues. In our paper, we will explore group data-related harms from demographically identifiable information (DII) in geospatial data. Group privacy is an increasingly important issue in digital humanitarian work because algorithms are concerned with classifying individuals into groups. Consequently, analysis needs to transcend harms caused by individual re-identification and a lack of consent. We will explore four harms posed by commonly used geospatial data: (i) Biases from missing/underrepresented categories. (ii) Mosaic effect – unintentional sensitive knowledge discovery from combining disparate datasets. And AI's role in facilitating and accelerating data mosaicking which obscures (minute) data problems (e.g., biases) that sum up in the end. (iii) Misuse of data (whether it is shared or not). (iv) Cost-benefit analysis (cost of protection-vs-misuse risk). Using threat modelling methods the paper contributes to the literature on group privacy harms in the humanitarian domain by suggesting an appropriate (geo-)data triage and how this can also be relevant for the wider use of geodata modelling.

Crossing Boundaries: An Ethics of Mapping in the Humanitarian Use of AI
Isaac Oluoch

Over the past decade, researchers have turned to using artificial intelligence (AI) in the mapping of vulnerable communities in the Global South, notably in 'slums' and informal settlements. This is because geographic information (geoinformation hereon) is relied on for urban planning as well as policy making at city and state levels (e.g. for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals). And AI methods using both supervised and unsupervised algorithms, have been leveraged to improve the speed as well as accuracy of classifications used in these mapping initiatives. However, just as scholars of geoinformation systems (GIS) began to recognise the need for ethical reflection of these technologies (e.g. in critical geography and critical GIS studies), there has also been growing recognition of the ethical dangers of AI (e.g. in data justice and surveillance studies). And this critical reflection has produced codes of ethics by private and private institutions for both these technologies. This paper will aim to review these codes of ethics, with particular focus on: i) highlighting overlaps in the ethical use of GIS and AI, ii) whether these overlaps can be used to produce ethical guidelines in the use of AI to support the mapping of vulnerable communities.

Algorithmic content curation on social media and human rights
Dorina Gyetván

Every minute we share millions of (personal) data on social media and simultaneously artificial intelligence advances and its ability to use, manipulate personal information, and predict user behaviour evolves. Vast amount of data is collected by algorithms, which then use the accumulated information to profile users, curate content by creating the so-called filter bubbles and rabbit holes, and ultimately influence privacy, freedom of expression and other human rights on social media. Social media platforms curate content to capture and keep users' attention as our attention becomes a commodity: by personalising content to users the only aim is not simply to provide better service to the user, but platforms are financially interested in keeping our attention and collecting our data. These processes make it impossible for users to freely seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers and consequently, algorithmic personalisation is a direct threat to freedom of expression. The presentation intends to shed some light on echo chambers, filter bubbles, rabbit holes and content curation through algorithms on social media and identify how these affect (threaten) freedom of expression and the right to privacy online.

A web-based map as a digital representation of place and source of data in geographical research - the case study of the Google Maps
Maciej Główczyński

One of the essential parts of creating a digital place representation in spatial media is the map. Due to the development of digital technologies, maps are subject to constant changes and updates. It is related to the evolution of Web 2.0, which has changed the paradigm of communication and interaction between its users and various digital platforms. It has opened up new possibilities for creating and sharing content with other users and filled the web with unstructured, large volumes of data. Thus, maps are constantly being changed, updated, overwritten by expert and amateur users, and segregated and filtered by the algorithms of digital platforms, so that humans can interact with the various spatial and social contexts embodied through them. In this context, the map itself becomes a practice and, at the same time, a medium for communicative processes. The main objective of the presentation is to discuss the role of web-based maps in creating digital representations of places and their potential as a source of spatial data. Conducted spatial analyses of Google Maps data revealed significant inequalities in access to digital content depending on the language used, and revealed areas that are marginalized on the map by this digital platform.

Epistemologies of Landscape in the Age of Deep Mediatization
Maria Faust

Mankind's shift to digitalization has almost forgotten its natural origins in the ecosystem of plants and living organisms. The examination of aesthetic landscape epistemologies is situated in the drive to rediscover natural belonging. Based on classical works on the philosophy of landscape (e.g., Simmel 1953) and recent publications on deep mediatization, we seek to lay out a new theory of landscape. The framework considers not only the epistemological premises that have changed through the `mediated construction of the social reality', but also the global scope of its conditions, e.g., the interplay between conservation, destruction and (spatial) accessibility. Thus, a new theory of landscape must entangle, unpack and unfold the assemblage on how turning away from (digital) media manifests in landscape 'Anschauung' with its five sense (smell, touch, taste, hearing, and sight) in contrast to the less dimensionally rich digitally mediated sphere. We have to unpack how balance and equilibrium can be reached between the mediated, non-mediated and its (un)touched materiality, embodiment, contestation and emotion in terms of authenticity, and the relations between these different structures.

WORKSHOP: Data Ethics and Assessing Risk when Sharing Data
Open Data Institute

11:45-13:00 - Room 154

Data can help unlock huge value for the economy, society, and the environment, by improving public services and increasing efficiency and effectiveness in business. To tackle some of the biggest challenges of our time data needs to be shared by multiple organisations across sectors and between societies and governments. However, trust (or the absence of trust) in data and data practices can be a major barrier to data sharing.

We believe that the adoption of data assurance products and services should reassure organisations and individuals who want to share or reuse data, and support better data governance practices, fostering trust and sustainable behaviour change, in all sectors including academia.

Join us in this workshop to learn more about our research in this area and understand how to use the ODI's Data Ethics Canvas and the Data Sharing Risk Assessment Workbook. There will be an opportunity for you to feedback to us how these could support your own research.

About the ODI

The ODI aims to enable the development of data infrastructure in ways that benefit people, companies, governments and civil society. We focus on increasing data flows around the data ecosystem, improving skills and capabilities, and encouraging innovation. We support data flows, focusing our efforts in three broad areas:

Improving the data practices of organisations so that they can build and manage adequate data infrastructure and data use. Our work on data literacy and data assurance is part of these efforts.

Tackling challenges so that the data ecosystem works better. Our data institutions work and our work on data ecosystems and innovation are part of this.

Gathering and creating research, evidence and knowledge about data and the benefits of open, trustworthy data access, to inform companies and policymakers as they create data infrastructure, assets, practices and policies. This is our evidence and foresight work.

Parallel Sessions B
14:50-16:00

B1: Room 154

The ethics of researching online safe spaces
Anita Fuentes, Nerea Boneta-Sádaba, and Sergio Tomás-Forte

The concept of online safe spaces, originally reserved for the subaltern, has undergone important changes with the emergence of the manosphere. The online platforms that make up the manosphere not only serve as places for hate to go unpunished, but can also offer safe spaces for users to share their feelings of victimhood and build affective bonds. This paper compares two digital ethnographic studies carried out by the members of this research team. One in a social media platform oriented towards the Spanish crossdresser community, and the other in a Spanish online forum known for its misogynistic content. By juxtaposing these two case studies, we aim to elucidate whether or not the same ethical considerations should apply when researching a safe space for oppressed groups and minorities as opposed to a safe space populated by hegemonic groups. Our ethical analysis focuses on four main factors: the implications of the privacy settings offered by the platform, the vulnerability of the users that populate it, the sensitivity of the topics covered by the platform's community and, finally, an ongoing negotiation and reaffirmation of consent in the utilization of the users' personal data.

Geospatial Ethical frameworks: A meta-analysis
Doug Specht

The last ten years have seen the development of a wide range of ethical frameworks in relation to cartography and the use of geospatial data. These frameworks, which have become more prevalent since 2018, have been produced by a

wide range of actors, including UNICEF, learned societies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national bodies, and multinational companies. Their development comes in response to concerns over the increasing amounts of geospatial data now collected and used by a growing number of organizations. Each of the frameworks claims to offer some definitive guidance on the ethical use of geospatial data and on ensuring ethical sharing between data sources. In this paper, we examine each of these frameworks and compare their similarities and differences to analyse their guidance based on their content and degree of prescriptive action. We identify the remaining gaps in ethical frameworks, highlight potential issues in their implementation, and challenge their potential use for 'ethics-washing'. The paper concludes with recommendations for the appropriate implementation of particular frameworks in given situations.

Fabrication as an ethical data practice?
Natasha Whiteman

The secondary use and combination of online data sets has diversified long-held concerns relating to the principle of anonymity in research. It is now not enough to think about how researchers might anonymise the subjects of their studies, but also how the re-identification of subjects in 'anonymised' data might be prevented. Against this backdrop, this paper considers the ways that forms of "deliberative fabrication" (Markham, 2012) that have a contested history in qualitative research – such as the use of composites and fictionalised data - have been promoted as ethical practice by online researchers. These include emerging forms of "visual fabrication" (Tildenberg, 2014, 2015: Warfield et al., 2019) that can be seen to present their own methodological and ethical possibilities and pitfalls.

B2: Room UG04

Contact-tracing and privacy: A digital literacy and information question. The Italian case
Riccardo Nanni, Diletta Huyskes, and Maurizio Napolitano

In February 2020, Italy became the first European country to be hit by Covid and undergo a national lockdown. At the time of writing, Italy has one of the highest vaccination rates across Europe. However, the adoption of the government-sponsored contact-tracing app "Immuni" has been limited all throughout the pandemic. Why has this mismatch occurred? While reasons are manifold, this article observes privacy concerns as a key element and investigates the reasons for such concerns. The authors build their argument upon a threefold analysis: first, the analysis of interactions in the Immuni Github repository; second, a thematic qualitative analysis of grey literature on Immuni deployment; and third, two focus groups with privacy and IT experts. Drawing from literature on the social construction of technology, the authors argue that privacy concerns vis-à-vis the application were triggered by users' lack of knowledge around data collection and treatment by the app. This lack of knowledge is due to poor information as well as low digital literacy among the general Italian population. This article proposes digital literacy as an instrument to reduce mistrust in digital means during times of public emergency.

The ethics of suggestion in digital mental health technologies
Jessy Williams

Suggestion and its correlate, suggestibility, denote the capacity of humans to influence themselves or others through ideas and associations. For Sigmund Freud, suggestion played an important role in his practice of hypnosis, a precursor to psychoanalysis. Freud abandoned hypnosis because of the realisation that patients' 'free association' could give access to their unconscious states. The psychological and arguably mystical practice of suggestion has not disappeared in our digitally mediated era. Indeed, there are both material and psychic elements to practices of suggestion in digital technologies; these are particularly salient in personalisation algorithms. Tailored advice, images, webpages, prices and emails give a transcendental quality to interfaces that seemingly understand your wants, needs and desires. At the same time, our material data points (clicks, likes, watch-times etc.) feed personalisation algorithms. In this paper, I consider the ethical implications of using personalisation algorithms in mental health apps and chatbots, through the notion of suggestion. The paper aims to contribute to debates in digital geographies about the power of technologies to persuade or manipulate and in a mental health context, what the ethics of such techniques mean for understanding digital 'therapeutic encounters'.

Investigating ethical entanglements: a narrative and comparative examination of Covid-19 digital tracing applications in South Africa and Switzerland
Jennifer Barella and Saskia Greyling

People and digital artefacts are entangled in political, organisational and ethical sense-making processes. The contestations of these entanglements became the topic of public debate during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many

states across the globe encouraged, or even enforced, digital tracing technologies to limit the spread of contagion. This emergency response seemingly overtook the privacy of individual's digital footprints, prompting an international debate that foregrounded ethical considerations about digital interventions by states. These debates shaped the implementation of tracking applications, both in relation to Covid-19 and beyond. Through a comparative project between Cape Town and Geneva, we analyse the development, deployment, and afterlife of digital tracing applications. We draw on and discuss our emerging methodology that brings together Light et al.'s (2016) "walkthrough method", that examines proximity digital tracing applications for their production and use, and that describes the process and tentative findings of this research through object narrative (Humphries and Smith 2014). Through this methodology we consider the role of the artefact itself, as well as the actors that shape it, the infrastructures in which it operates, and how the artefact frames its users. In so doing, we question comparatively the framing of artefacts as a pandemic-induced catalyst for digitalisation of urban and mobility governance.

B3: Online (link will be shared with registered participants)

Challenges and opportunities of the representation using Artificial Intelligence tools to hire personnel. Approaches from a posthuman perspective.
Julieta Madeleine García Zamora

Artificial intelligence tools are rapidly changing the way companies hire personnel, but the use of these tools can bring new challenges and opportunities. This talk will explore the challenges of using AI tools in the hiring process with a posthuman ethic perspective to consider approaches for ensuring that these tools are used fairly, equitably, and respectfully for all candidates. One of the critical challenges of using AI tools in the hiring process is that they can perpetuate and amplify existing biases, such as those based on gender, race, and socioeconomic status. On the other hand, AI tools have the potential to improve the hiring process by automating routine tasks, increasing efficiency, and reducing the need for human intervention. From a posthuman perspective, this talk will consider how the representation of AI tools can impact the hiring process, including how these tools are implemented and used. Additionally, the conference will explore how posthuman concepts, such as non-human agency and posthuman ethics, can guide the development and use of AI tools in the hiring process.

Digital Divide : Case Study of India
Nivedita Singh

Digital Divide is an emerging phenomena of spatial and social inequality. This paper unpacks the relationship between rural and urban digital divide in the context of globalization. This paper provides intensive literature review. This paper uses tools and techniques of epistemology and ontology. There are varied kinds of driving forces which includes education, human capital, social & cultural phenomena which creates a wide gap of digital divide. Globalization and Liberalization has created a massive urban hotspot of digitisation. Furthermore, praxis of power and social positionality plays a crucial role in creating digital divide. However, income and education indicators played a crucial role in creating a wide gap of digital divide in the context of India. However, this paper provides critical comparative study between developed nations and India with respect to the digital divide. Furthermore, it also finds many crucial factors for creating a wide digital divide between rural and urban areas. However, it also unpacks the relationship for producing a new kind of digital social inequality. This is a new form of social inequality which is embedded digitally as well as spatially. Hence, this paper provides innovative social policy for reducing the gap of digital social inequality.

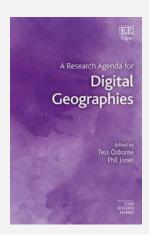**Book Launch Panel: A research agenda for digital geographies**
Phil Jones, Tess Osborne, and others

16:00-17:00 – Room UG05

Over the past decade, digital geographies has emerged as a dynamic area of scholarly enquiry, critically examining how the digital has reshaped the geography of our world. Bringing together authors working at the cutting-edge of the field, and grounding abstract ideas in case studies, this Research Agenda looks at the ways in which technology has altered all aspects of society, culture and the environment.

Critically outlining the state of play around these topics, each chapter unpacks a case study related to pioneering research, suggesting possible avenues for research that digital geographers might pursue. The Research Agenda concludes with an identification of three priority areas for future work: the intimate nature of our relations with technology; approaches to resisting the power of technology companies; and finally, the need for more interdisciplinary approaches to examining digital geographies.

Rooted in the subject areas of technology, geography, sociology and political science, A Research Agenda for Digital Geographies will be greatly valuable to human and socio-cultural geographers, and digital social scientists with an interest in how the digital affects society and space.

About the speakers

Tess Osborne is a human geographer interested in the emotional experience of urban environments. Her ESRC funded doctoral research uses an innovative set of methods, including wearable video and bio-sensing equipment, to investigate how urban environments shape people's emotional wellbeing.

Phil Jones is a cultural geographer who focuses on issues related to the city. His work deals with a number of research areas including urban regeneration, cycling and the arts. He has a particular interest in research methods, including qualitative GIS, mobile interviewing and arts-based approaches.

Sessions in Detail: Day 2

Parallel Sessions c
10:10-11:15

C1: Room UG04

Algeria's Challenge for Sovereign and Democratic Data
Laeed Zaghlami

It is worth to recall that the energy and digital transition sectors are above all generators of data, and that statistics and foresight work in one way or another to collect, analyse and store data, which facilitates the rational governance of data on a practical and strategic level. Today, growing tensions over the issue of data, ethics and its localisation are arising between a large and growing number of emerging economies with giant populations. In Algeria, CERIST is one of the renters and hosts for scientific and technical information but it is still facing hosting and storing difficulties. For instance, Facebook is the edifying example for Algeria, where more than 25 million subscribers are engaged in all kinds of battles on the blue space, sometimes endangering their lives and the lives of others. Meanwhile, Meta's CEO has excelled in series of data manipulation, fake news and disinformation. My purpose is not only to evoke the importance of the legal issue relating to the protection of personal data and their democratisation as enacted in the Algerian Law numbered 18-07 of June 10, 2018, but also the need to secure and protect personal data and other types of data that contribute to making Algeria a sovereign, rich and prosperous country.

Climate Change and Disinformation, fake news and fake trends
Paula Cordeiro

While working on the public's behalf, 'news' means verifiable information in the public interest. Corporate interests and formal and informal actions to fulfil socio-cultural factors influence critical power objectives concerning climate change and climate action approaches. We consider social media communication potentially leading to disinformation as a set of false ideas and facts that may cause disruptive effects on public opinion throughout. Research shows a considerable increase in climate change coverage. Are mainstream news media using social media to approach climate change stories? What stories are being produced for Instagram? The focus is on short-form videos (reels) under the #climatechange hashtag compared to those produced by public media. Public news media play a prominent role in Western Europe. We will compare BBC (UK), SVT/Radio (Sweden) and NPO (Netherlands) with reels under the #climatechange hashtag to understand: the topics approached under the constructive elements to structure the journalistic coverage, as an approach that explains the problem, includes potential solutions; the future, adding the what to the journalistic lead, discussing how it may develop; avoiding polarisation by being diverse and inclusive; providing context using different approaches to explain the problem; engages and empowers with co-creating and a diverse set of perspectives.

Interactive workshop: Seeing London through the Ethics of Pokémon Go
Jack Lowe

11:30-13:00 – Room 152-153 (Cayley)

This interactive session will focus on the ethics of one everyday use of digital technology involving significant data collection and processing: mobile gaming. Pokémon GO has remained one of the highest grossing mobile game apps worldwide since its launch in 2016. In parallel with the game's popularity, player data has been harvested and manipulated extensively, with wider implications for privacy, consent and behaviour.

After a brief overview of the different data transfers involved in Pokémon GO, we will take the game outside. We will consider how data flows shape and are shaped by the gameplay, the ethical issues surrounding this activity, and how these data flows ultimately affect the ways people engage with material spaces.

Note: we will lead the activity in groups, with one designated player per group. If you already have the game downloaded, or want to download it before the session, please do play it with us!

About Jack Lowe

I am a cultural geographer and interactive narrative designer whose research and creative practice explores how people engage with place through playful, site-specific, experimental and/or immersive media forms.

My recently-completed practice-based PhD project involved independently making and testing location-based games in East Kent in the UK. This method sought to understand the potential of location-based game development and play for discovering, sharing and engaging purposefully with the wide-ranging narratives through which this area is imagined, lived, performed and contested today. Creative works have included The Timekeeper's Return, a mixed-reality treasure hunt in Canterbury's Cathedral Quarter played using QR codes; Canterbury in 3 Words, a participatory storytelling platform and location-based treasure hunt played using the What3Words app; and The Gates to Dreamland, a locative audiowalk game based around Margate's Dreamland amusement park, made as part of A Different LENS (a collaborative story-mapping project funded by Arts Council England, Kent County Council and Margate NOW).

As part of my interdisciplinary activities at RHUL, I have been part of the StoryFutures Creative Cluster network, acting as a consultant for SMEs on game design, place and environment in digital narrative experiences. This notably led to my involvement as a writer, narrative designer and consultant for Interrobang?!, a theatre-meets-online gaming experience developed by immersive theatre company Gideon Reeling.

About the organising institutions

The Digital Geographies Research Group is an academic research group of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG).

Digital technologies are changing the life worlds we research as well as the very way we ourselves undertake research and teaching. Therefore this group seeks to be a welcoming forum to discuss these changes for geographers from different epistemic and methodological traditions, and for those conducting theoretical as well as applied research work. The DGRG is a platform for exchanges within and between sub-disciplines, engaging with the diversity of geographies of and through the digital, and thereby nurtures and deepens discussion of geographical digital scholarship and practice.

The Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI) is a world-leading centre in the study of media and communication, and renowned for its critical and international research. CAMRI is located in the School of Media and Communication. It builds on a long tradition of research in media and communication that spans five decades, as the university launched the first UK media degree in 1975. The University of Westminster has been consistently ranked highly in media and communication studies ever since.

CAMRI's objective is to serve as a platform for critical media and communication studies that develops the legacy of what James Curran has labelled the 'Westminster School'. This 'Westminster School' describes the pioneering researchers in what became CAMRI who helped shape the development of communication research in the UK and beyond, by emphasising media policy, political economy, media and democratic theory, British media history, and communication technology. Today our research analyses communication power in the light of ongoing transformations in society and the communications landscape. CAMRI's research is organised in four thematic areas focusing on: communication, technology and society; cultural identities and social change; global media; and policy and political economy.

CAMRI researchers study media and communication from international and global perspectives. Our work privileges sociological inquiry and qualitative methods. It takes a contextual approach that is historical, sceptical and nuanced. Our research is grounded in theory and is rich in empirical detail, thereby informing both a critical understanding of contemporary media, as well as new approaches to policy-making and practice.

CAMRI's research is based on a broader purpose and vision for society. Our work examines how media and societies interact, and aims to contribute to progressive social change, equality, justice, and democracy. CAMRI takes a public interest and humanistic approach that seeks to promote participation, facilitate informed debate, and strengthen capabilities for critical thinking, complex problem-solving and creativity.